

3 Performing Arts Production Process

The last time you went to see a performing arts production, such as a play, musical, dance recital or concert, did you stop to think about all the work that must have been done to get the show from someone's initial idea to the opening night?

Before the audience comes through the door of the theatre and the performers step onto the stage, there is much to be done. The production process begins with an initial idea for a show and includes all the planning, rehearsals and other preparations. It can involve a large number of people working in teams towards a common goal. There will be rehearsals for performers led by the director, musical director and/or choreographer. The venue, costumes, sets, props, lighting, sound effects and publicity all need to be organised too.

This unit will guide you through the various stages of the process of putting on a show. It will give you the information you need when working towards Unit A3 Performing Arts Production Process, taking you step by step through what needs to be done, explaining how things happen in the professional world and giving you advice on how this might relate to your own work.

Learning outcomes

After completing this unit you should be able to achieve the following learning outcomes:

1. Know how to carry out planning requirements for a performing arts product
2. Be able to take part in the developmental process for a performing arts product
3. Understand the purpose of the planning and preparation process in the creation of a performing arts product.

Assessment and grading criteria

This table shows you what you must do in order to achieve a pass, merit or distinction, and where you can find activities in this book to help you.

To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 Identify the necessary planning requirements for a performing arts product Assessment activity 1a page 6 Assessment activity 1b page 7	M1 Describe the necessary planning requirements for a performing arts product Assessment activity 1a page 6 Assessment activity 1b page 7	D1 Explain the necessary planning requirements for a performing arts product with insight, foresight and confidence Assessment activity 1a page 6 Assessment activity 1b page 7
P2 Identify appropriate materials/equipment suitable for a performing arts product Assessment activity 1c page 10	M2 Describe appropriate materials/equipment suitable for a performing arts product with an attempt at shaping the nature of the work in development Assessment activity 1c page 10	D2 Explain appropriate materials/equipment suitable for a performing arts product in a way that shows a positive and artistic contribution to the work in development Assessment activity 1c page 10
P3 Communicate with other team members and/or event personnel as appropriate Assessment activity 2a page 14	M3 Communicate with other team members and/or event personnel using appropriate channels and methods to ensure communication achieves its objective Assessment activity 2a page 14	D3 Communicate effectively with other team members and/or event personnel Assessment activity 2a page 14
P4 Carry out a role in the development process showing a grasp of the task requirements and with some commitment Assessment activity 2b page 16	M4 Carry out a role in the development process showing that the task requirements are handled with some thought and attention to detail and with some commitment Assessment activity 2b page 16	D4 Carry out a role in the development process showing that the task requirements are handled with efficiency, commitment and independence Assessment activity 2b page 16
P5 Evaluate the main strengths and weaknesses of the product with reference to the planning and preparation process. Assessment activity 3 page 18	M5 Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the product with reference to the planning and preparation process and with some reasoning. Assessment activity 3 page 18	D5 Evaluate in detail the effectiveness of the product with reference to the planning and preparation process and with considered conclusions Assessment activity 3 page 18

How you will be assessed

This unit will be assessed by an internal assignment that will be designed and marked by the teachers/tutors at your centre. You will be assessed on your contribution to a project that involves the organisation and planning of a performing arts event. You will need to show that you can work as part of a team to make decisions about what needs to be done and to put the plans into action.

The work you produce may include:

- a production diary or process log
- planning documentation, such as schedules and lists of resources
- examples of communication, such as memos, emails and/or letters
- video recordings of meeting and other planning activities
- observations from your teacher/tutor.



Josie, 16-year-old dance student

When I read about this unit in my course handbook I didn't know what to expect. I was worried that I wouldn't enjoy it because it didn't revolve around dancing. It turned out to be one of the highlights of my course.

The project we were set was to plan and organise a school production of *Bugsy Malone*. For most of the time we worked in teams. I opted to join the costume team. Others in my class opted for lighting, marketing and set or stage management.

We began by coming up with ideas for costumes. We were set a budget so we had to make sure we could afford what we were planning to make, buy and hire. My favourite part of the project was the week before the show. This is known as production week and it was really hectic as all the different elements of the show had to come together. It was great seeing the costumes on stage at last, but there were still some last-minute alterations to be made.

In this unit I learned a lot about how a show is planned and all the preparations you don't think about when you go to the theatre. I also learned how important good organisation and communication skills are to the success of the final production.

Over to you

- What are your thoughts and feelings on beginning this unit?
- Have you ever been involved in the planning of a production before? If so what did you learn during the process?
- What do you hope to learn during this process?

3.1 Carry out planning requirements for a performing arts product

Warm up

How many people does it take...

Imagine you are a member of a theatre company that is about to produce a family pantomime. Other than the performers, what other people are likely to be involved in the process of producing the show?

Make a list of who might be needed and what they would do.

Key terms

Budget – the amount of money allocated to a production.

3.1.1 Planning and decisions

All performing arts productions begin with a series of decisions. A professional company may begin by selecting an idea for a performance. Any company planning a production must take into account a number of practical issues, which will affect the decisions they make. These are likely to include:

- the time available
- the nature of the venue(s) where the performance will be staged
- the resources available to the company
- the budget available for the production.

The performance

Your work for this unit may begin with a decision about the type of performance you will produce. If your teacher/tutor allows you to choose the piece you will need to weigh up the pros and cons of several ideas to decide which is most suitable. However, your teacher/tutor may have chosen a specific play, musical or dance piece based on the size of your group, your skills and the resources available.

The venue

You must also consider where the performance will be staged. Theatrical spaces come in a variety of shapes and sizes and some productions will have certain requirements or may be more suited to one theatre than another. For your production you'll need to think about:

- the size and shape of the stage
- where the audience will be in relation to the performers
- what technical equipment (e.g. light and sound) is available.

The design concept

In the professional world the planning process begins with a series of meetings. The director of the production will discuss their ideas for what the production will look like with other members of the creative team. These ideas are sometimes known as the design concept. The director will discuss the design of the set, costumes, lighting and sound. In your production you may be working under the direction of your teacher/tutor. You should, however, go through a similar process to a professional team as the design concept for the production is discussed and agreed.

Budget

Budgeting is central to any performing arts production. In the professional world an administrator or finance officer will allocate a budget to cover production and marketing costs. The budget may then be divided into separate allocations for costumes, set, hire of technical equipment, etc. It is vital that costs are kept within the allocated budget. In your production you may also be allocated a small budget. It is important that you discuss how this money will be used.

The production schedule

At the beginning of the planning process the company must decide when the major deadlines for the production will be, most importantly the 'opening night' of the production. The organisation of any production then begins with the drawing up of a production schedule working back from that date. This is essentially a timeline that sets out the important dates and deadlines for the project. It should begin with an initial production meeting and end with the opening of the show. Depending on the type of production being organised it will include the dates of the get-in and fit-up as well as the technical and dress rehearsals. It should also include deadlines for the distribution of publicity materials and the completion of sets and costumes.

Production meetings

The production process will begin with a series of meetings in which design requirements are discussed and rehearsal and production schedules are drawn up. As the production of a performing arts event involves a lot of different activities carried out by many different people these meetings are vital to ensure that everyone understands what they need to do and that progress towards deadlines is monitored.

Remember

During your work on this unit you should keep a record of your activities and the decisions you make in a production file. Get started by producing an outline of the performance event you will be planning and organising. Remember to include details about:

- the production being planned
- the venue
- the design concept or 'look' of the production
- the budget
- the main deadlines.

Key terms

Get-in – the process of moving scenery, lighting and other equipment into the venue.

Fit-up – the process of setting up scenery, lighting and other equipment for a show.

Technical rehearsal – a run-through of the show to allow the technical members of the production team to practise their cues and identify any problems.

Dress rehearsal – the final rehearsal before the opening night where the show is run in full costume.



PLTS

Working as a member of the production team during meetings and other activities is an excellent opportunity to develop your personal learning and thinking skills by working confidently with others.



Meetings are vital to the success of the production process.



Assessment activity 1a

P1 M1 D1

Take part in a meeting to discuss the planning requirements for your production. Start by listing everything that needs to be done before the opening night. Place them in the order in which they need to be done and produce a production schedule that includes deadlines for each stage of the process.

During the meeting you should make notes and afterwards write up in your process file the plans you have discussed and agreed describing the planning requirements you have identified.

Grading Tip M1

You could consider the following questions:

- How long will each task take?
- How long will each role fit into the process?

Grading Tip D1

Explain the importance of the planning requirements you have listed. You could do this by considering the following:

- Why is each task you have identified necessary?
- Why did you place them in the order you did on the production schedule?
- Can you foresee any potential problems with the tasks identified and deadlines agreed?
- How might these problems be avoided?

Your job

Once you have drawn up your plans and agreed your production schedule you will then need to decide who does what. Depending on the type of production you are planning there will be a need for designers, technicians, backstage and front-of-house staff, and marketing people.

If you are working as part of a large group you may wish to divide up into teams with each team being allocated a role, e.g. marketing team, stage-management team, costume team. Alternatively, you may be allocated a specific role by your teacher/tutor. You may have to have an interview for the job you would like. Either way it is important that you understand precisely what you are personally required to do at each stage of the production process.



Assessment activity 1b

P1 M1 D1

To show that you understand your role and the responsibilities you have been given you will need to draw up an action plan for your work on this unit. It should include:

- a job description of the role you are carrying out
- deadlines for the individual tasks you are required to undertake
- details of others you will be working with (your team)
- an explanation of how your role will contribute to the production.

Grading Tip D1

Your action plan should show that you understand how your role fits into the production process by explaining:

- the importance of the tasks you will be undertaking
- why you need to meet the set deadlines.

3.1.2 Marketing

A performing arts company bases its choice of production on what it knows will sell. Like other businesses, theatre and dance companies need to understand their customers – the audience. The type of audience a production might appeal to will need to be taken into account when the show is marketed. Different groups of people enjoy different types of show. For example, families with young children will be the main audience for a pantomime while productions such as *High School Musical* will be mainly watched by pre-teens and a show like *Phantom of the Opera* will attract older teenagers and adults. Each type of audience will need a different sort of marketing.

For your production, make sure you identify your target audience and use appropriate forms of marketing to attract them to your show.



Activity: The work-life balance

What is the target audience for your production?

In groups, produce marketing materials for your production. You should use at least one form of marketing. Choose from a poster, press release or flyer.



PLTS

Setting deadlines for your tasks and keeping to them will use your skills as a self manager.



Functional skills

The production of your action plan will require you to use writing skills.

Key terms

Season – a period in the company's calendar e.g. September– January. Many production companies produce two 'seasons' of work per year.

3.1.3 Product

Large production companies often produce a range of different types of show each season. For example each they might produce:

- a family show for the Christmas market
- a work by a new playwright
- a play that is a set text for English or drama examinations
- a play based on a local or regional theme.

Smaller touring companies sometimes specialise in a particular style of work. Walk the Plank, for example, specialise in large outdoor events that include fireworks and other special effects, while Trestle Theatre is known for its mask-based work.

Some companies are commissioned to produce work, for example a 'Theatre in Education' company, might be asked to create a piece to respond to a particular issue, such as road safety or healthy eating. The APE Theatre Company, for instance, toured with *Too Much Punch for Judy* about drink-driving, *Vicious Circle* about carbon emissions and *Pills Thrills & Automobiles* about drugs.



Activity: What's on in your region?

In groups, look at the programme of shows produced during a season by a theatre or dance company based in your region. You could do this by looking at a copy of their brochure or by visiting their website.

Consider the following questions:

1. Does the company have an artistic policy that influences their choices of performance?
2. What does the range of work they produce tell you about the company?
3. Is any of the work seasonal, e.g. do they produce a family show at Christmas?
4. What does the type of work they produce tell you about the kind of audience the company is targeting? Do they appear to be trying to attract a wide and diverse group? Does the work seem to appeal to a narrower audience, such as a certain age-group, an ethnic audience or audience interested in a certain type of theatre?

Key terms

Artistic policy – the type of work a company produces and the reasons why they produce it.

3.2 The developmental process for a performing arts product



Warm up

Lists, lists and more lists!

The development process of a performing arts production usually begins with a series of lists being drawn up to identify all the different materials and equipment that will be needed for the show.

What kind of list will you have to draw up for your role?

3.2.1 Development

Once your plans have been agreed and you have been allocated a role, the real work can begin. If you are performing you will begin to explore the material – rehearsing, working on choreography and so on. Further meetings will be scheduled to discuss and agree the design requirements for costumes, set and props. The marketing of the production will be considered and ideas for publicity materials agreed. You will then need to draw up a list of appropriate materials and equipment required for the production area you are responsible for.



Case study: Aladdin – props list

Mick, the ASM for Big Hat Theatre Company, is drawing up a list of props needed for the show. He goes through the script, identifying what is needed and describing each prop. He then notes whether the item is in the company's stock of props or if it needs to be made, bought or hired.

The assistant stage manager makes use of the final column to track items that have been found or made.

Props List: Act One – Scene One

Item	Description	Source	Done
Basket	Shallow wicker washing basket with handles.	From stock.	
Washing	Various general items e.g. shirts, vests. 3 pairs of large 'comedy bloomers' similar to those worn by Widow Twankey. Must be colourful e.g. spots/stripes.	Some from stock. 'Comedy bloomers' to be made in house.	
Paper money	20 bank notes, larger than standard size.	Make.	
Lamp	Genie style.	Buy.	

1. Why is it important to include a description of each item?
2. Who will Mick need to contact with regards to the 'bloomers'?



Did you know?

The word prop is short for property and refers to any object that is held or used on stage. Smaller props that are used by one particular performer, e.g. a handkerchief, are known as personal props and become the responsibility of the performer during the run of the performance.



Functional skills

Presenting your ideas to the group will require you to use your speaking and listening skills



Assessment activity 1c

P2 M2 D2

1. Identify the equipment and/or resources required for the area of the production you are working on. For example, if you are working as part of the costume team you will need to draw up a list of the costume requirements for each performer. You should include detailed descriptions of each item you have identified.
2. Present your ideas to the whole group at a production meeting. You will need to:
 - list the materials and/or equipment you have chosen explaining the reasons for your choices
 - use sketches, drawings or diagrams where necessary to illustrate your ideas.

Grading Tip M2

You should describe the materials and equipment you think you will need as well as how they will be used.

Grading Tip D2

You should explain why your choices are suitable for the production and why you think they will make a positive contribution to the show. For example, if you are involved in marketing and publicity you might explain why your design for a poster suits the theme and content of your production and will attract your target audience.

Preparing for rehearsals

Few performance companies rehearse in the space in which they will actually perform, so before rehearsals can begin the space they are going to use needs to be prepared. The shape and size of the performance space will need to be marked out with coloured tape to match the dimensions of the actual performance space. If a drama piece is being rehearsed, the position of any large items of set will also need to be marked out. This job is normally carried out by the stage management team.



Activity: Marking out the performance space

Produce a scale drawing of the stage/performance space of the venue you will be using showing the stage and the entrances and exits.

Use this drawing to mark out your rehearsal space.

The rehearsal period

The first rehearsal of a production marks an important phase in the production process and marks the start of a busy time for all involved.

- Performers will work with the director, musical director and/or choreographer.
- Members of the production teams will be busy building sets and/or making props and costumes.
- Technical members of staff will ensure that any lighting/sound equipment needed are available, perhaps by hiring specialist equipment.
- Those involved in marketing and administration will ensure publicity materials are produced and distributed.
- The stage management team will play a vital role recording what goes on in rehearsals and communicating requirements to the technical and production teams. The deputy stage manager (DSM) will attend all rehearsals and prepare the 'book' or prompt script.

Key terms

Prompt Script – an annotated script showing information about all aspects of the show, including lighting, sound, cues, blocking and where props and scenery will be used.

Cue – a signal for something to happen, for example a lighting or sound effect.

Blocking – the physical arrangement of the actors on stage.



Performers will work with directors right through the rehearsal period, in the rehearsal room and the theatre itself.

3.2.2 Technical Production week

The final stage of the production process is known as production week. It involves the following processes.

The process	What needs to be done	Who is involved
The get-in	The set and other equipment are moved into the performance venue.	Stage management team Lighting and sound technicians
The fit-up	The lights are rigged (attached to the lighting grid and front-of-house lighting bars) and focused. Sound equipment is installed. The set is moved into place.	Stage management team Lighting and sound technicians
Plotting	Sound levels are set. All lighting cues are rehearsed and adjusted where necessary. Set changes are rehearsed.	Stage management team Lighting and sound technicians
Technical rehearsal	The show is run through to allow the technical team and stage crew to practise their cues. Often known as the 'tech' this is also an opportunity for the performers to get used to working with the lighting and sound cues.	Stage management team Lighting and sound technicians Director, choreographer, performers
Dress rehearsals	Before the opening night the show is normally run twice in full costume. The dress rehearsal is treated like a performance and some companies will run an 'open dress' with an invited audience. This is the first time the designers will see their work in action. They will attend and make any necessary last minute adjustments.	Stage management team Lighting and sound technicians Director, choreographer, performers Wardrobe team Set and costume designers



Health and safety issues must be identified and risk assessed.

Working safely

The theatre can be a dangerous place, particularly during production week. Many jobs may involve the lifting and moving of heavy or bulky equipment. Some jobs involve working at height or with electrical equipment. Where health and safety is an issue a risk assessment must be carried out. A risk assessment:

- identifies potential hazards in the work place
- identifies who might be at risk
- puts in place actions to minimise the risk.

Organisation during production week

Whether you are working for a large theatre company or on a student production good organisation is vital to the success of a production week. The get-in and fit-up must be planned meticulously. Having a written plan like the one below will ensure everything runs smoothly.

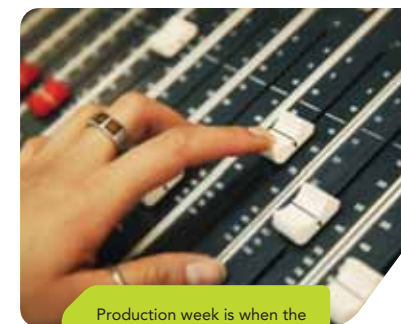
Plan for Fit-up Tues 7th – Thurs 9th May.		
Date/Time	Activity	Personnel
Tues 8.30–3.30	Rig on-stage lights	Kevin, James, Jim
Tues 3.30–4.30	Hang backdrop up stage	Laurie, Mick
Tues 4.30–6.30	Install rostra	Laurie, Mick, Harry, Ben
Wed 8.30–12.30	Rig front of house lights and sound	Kevin, James, Jim, Raj
Wed 1.30–6.30	Focus lights	Kevin, James, Jim, Raj
Thurs 8.30–10.30	Install large items of set	Laurie, Mick, Harry, Ben
Thurs 10.30–2.30	Plotting (Tidy backstage area and set up props table)	Kevin, James, Gina, (Harry & Ben)
Thurs 2.30–3.30	Sound check	Raj, Mary
Thurs 3.30–4.30	Scene change rehearsal	Laurie, Mick, Harry, Ben
Thurs 5.00–6.00	Health and safety session with cast (walk the set)	Full company and crew

3.2.3 Production team

With lots of different activities going on it is vital that safeguards are in place to make sure deadlines are met. It is also important that any decisions made by one person or team that might have an impact on the work of others are clearly communicated.

Meetings

Regular meetings are essential for communication during the production process. They provide opportunities for members of the various teams to meet, provide updates on progress and identify and deal with problems. An agenda should be drawn up before each meeting stating what needs to be discussed. The decisions made at meetings should also be recorded in the form of minutes or a report. and distributed to all affected personnel.



Production week is when the technical team swing into action.

Assessment activity 2a

P3 M3 D3

Functional skills

Producing memos and notices and recording your contribution to meetings will call for you to use your writing skills

Keep a log of the method you use to communicate with other team members in your production file and keep copies of any memos or notices you produce.

Record your contribution to meetings by producing a report of what was discussed and the decisions that were made.

Your tutor may also produce an observation record of how well you use communication skills when working with members of your team during practical activities.

Grading Tip M3

Think carefully how you communicate with other members of the production team. Be as supportive as you can to other team members and show that you are happy to share tasks.

Grading Tip D3

Make sure that your written and verbal communication is clear so that others understand. You should also show that you are supportive of others by being patient and appreciative of their efforts.

Case study: Production meeting agenda

Memo

To: All members of the production and technical teams

From: John Grundy – Production Manager

Subject: Production Meeting 2nd Dec

There will be a production meeting on Wed 2nd Dec in Studio 3.

Agenda:

1. Progress reports on
 - Set (Laurie & Mick)
 - Costume (Tony & Jen)
 - Lighting (Jim)
 - Sound (Raj)
2. Arrangements for production week.
3. AOB

1. What information might Laurie and Mick provide in their progress report?
2. What does AOB mean?

Using a production noticeboard

Professional theatre companies usually make use of a production noticeboard to exchange information between meetings. The DSM will post a call sheet on the notice board to inform performers of when they are required to attend rehearsals. Other team members may post reminders about meetings and other business.

Case study: Big Hat – production noticeboard

Big Hat Theatre Company is now in its second week of the production process. Take a look at their production noticeboard.

Production Notice Board

Production Meeting

All members of the production team are reminded that they should attend a production meeting on **Friday 30th Oct at 12:30p.m in room G5.**

Please be prepared to provide an update of progress made since the last meeting.

John Grundy
Production Manager

Tickets

Notice to cast and production team. Tickets go on sale on the 2nd Nov. Please make sure you have made any bookings for family & friends by the end of the week.

Kevin
Marketing & Sales

Call Sheet

DATE & TIME	COMPANY	CALL	LOCATION
Mon 10:30	Full company	Act 1 Scene 1	Studio 1
Monday 1:30	Jo Lewis, Ben Green, Sonia Patel.	Act1 Scenes 2 & 4	Studio 1
Tues 9:30	Jo Lewis, Kellis Harvey	Act 1 Scene 3	Studio 3
Tues 11:30	Full Company	Act 1 Scene 5	Studio 1
Tues 1:30	Jo Lewis, Ben Green, Sonia Patel.	Act 2 Scene 3	Studio 1
Tues 4:30	Jo Lewis, Kellis Harvey.	Act 2 Scene 1	Studio 3
		Act 2 Scene 2	Studio 3

You should now set up your own production noticeboard in your workspace to communicate important messages. Remember to check it every day.

Front of house

During the run of the show the front-of-house team will swing into action making sure the audience is looked after. This will include ensuring that the audience are seated for the performance, dealing with any problems and keeping disruption in the auditorium to a minimum. Backstage, the production will be overseen by the stage management team. In the professional theatre the stage manager will produce a report after each show recording anything that did not go to plan.

If everything has been well planned the show should run smoothly, however the unexpected can happen even in the professional world. If a problem arises it is important to deal with it calmly. The audience is often unaware of minor glitches provided no one panics.



In well run theatres the audience will not be aware of any problems behind the scenes.



Assessment activity 2b

P4 M4 D4

You should update your production log regularly during all stages of the production process.

Remember to describe all the tasks you are undertaking explaining why you are doing them. It may be helpful to include diagrams, drawings or photographs to illustrate your activities.

Your teacher will also be observing your progress as you complete the tasks associated with your role.

Grading Tip D4

You must show that you are working efficiently by meeting your deadlines. You should also show that you can remain committed to the project by staying on task and working without constant supervision.

3.3 The purpose of the planning and preparation process in the creation of a performing arts product

3.3.1 Evaluation

When the final curtain falls on your production you will need to consider how successful your planning and development activities were. You will do this by evaluating the work carried out during each phase of the production process. In doing this you should show that you have understood the purpose of the various activities you have undertaken.

You should begin by looking at the way in which you made your initial plans for the production. How were early decisions made? Did you correctly identify all the necessary planning requirements for the show? Was anything overlooked?

Key terms

Evaluate – analyse strengths and weaknesses and suggest improvements.

Use of materials and equipment

Each company member will have been responsible for using the materials and/or equipment as well as they could. For example, if you were a member of the marketing team you may have created posters using a camera to produce photos of the cast and a computer software program. Consider whether you used the equipment well and safely to design effective and eye catching materials. Did you damage any equipment?

Effectiveness of processes and techniques

During each phase of the production process you will have taken part in activities using a range of processes and techniques. During production week you may have used technical skills to rig and focus lights as well as team working skills to ensure tasks were completed within deadlines. How effectively did you undertake these activities?

Professional relationships and team working

A professional relationship is one that is built on trust and shared responsibility. If you work as part of a team each person in that team will contribute to the success of the final production. In your evaluation you will need to consider:

- whether the team worked effectively
- how well you communicated with each other.

Functional skills

Updating your log will allow you to use writing skills

3.3.2 Evaluating the final product and audience response



Functional skills

Taking part in the group meeting will allow you to use your speaking and listening skills.



PLTS

Evaluating your skills over the course of the production will allow you to show that you are a reflective learner

Did the audience respond to the work as you had planned and anticipated? If your aim was to provide the audience with a near-professional piece of theatre, you will need to work out if this happened. This could be done by gathering verbal responses from people as they leave the show or by asking people to complete an audience questionnaire.

Assessment activity 3

Take part in a group meeting after the performance where you discuss how successful your planning and development activities were. You should consider how:

- you made initial plans
- you used materials and equipment
- individual roles and responsibilities were decided
- well you operated as a team
- well you completed the tasks and processes you undertook
- the audience response to the production.

You should make notes to record your own opinion about the strengths and weaknesses of the work of the group and your own individual contribution.

Grading Tip MS

Show that you have understood why the planning process was so important to the final production. What might have happened if you didn't plan? You must also describe how you met the requirements of your role, and whether you would change how you do things in future performances.

Grading Tip DS

Always illustrate the points you make about strengths and weaknesses by referring to specific examples from the work you did.

WorkSpace



Big Hat Theatre Company

production schedule

Big Hat Theatre Company is a small touring theatre company that specialises in Theatre in Education as well as traditional family productions. It is planning a production of the family pantomime Aladdin. The show will be performed at the Newtown Arts Centre for three weeks from 14th Dec.

The company begins its planning activities by drawing up a production schedule. The schedule identifies the planning requirements for the production by setting out what needs to be done and the dates by which the various milestones must be reached.

The schedule includes:

- An initial production meeting to discuss design requirements for sets, costumes, lighting and marketing strategy
- Production meeting to finalise designs and marketing
- A read-through
- Props meeting
- Marking out rehearsal space and beginning rehearsals
- When marketing material is distributed and tickets go on sale
- Building the set
- Production meeting to review props, set, costumes and lighting
- Production meeting to make final arrangements for production week
- Final run in rehearsal space
- Get in, fit up, focus and plotting
- Tech rehearsal, dress rehearsals and photo call
- Run.

Think about it!

1. Why do you think there are so many meetings included in the production schedule?
2. What do you think the following terms mean?
 - read through
 - props
 - final run in rehearsal space
 - costume call
 - photo call
 - marketing materials

Assignment tips

- Good organisation is the key to success in this unit. Always keep your production log up to date by filling it in regularly. Remember also to file any documents in the correct place.
- It is important to remember that everyone contributing to the process has a vital role to play. You may think your role is not as important as that of someone else, e.g. if you are moving scenery and they are playing the lead role in the performance. But remember, the success of any production rests equally on the shoulders of all those involved.
- When working on design ideas keep all drafts, sketches and other rough work as this will provide evidence of how you developed the final product.
- Good levels of motivation are required by anyone who works in the performing arts industry. This project is no different. To do well in this unit you must contribute fully to the tasks you have been set, demonstrating that you are fully committed to the work. In group work make sure you play your part fully; don't sit back and let others do the work.
- Good attendance and punctuality are very important. Competition for jobs in the performing arts industry is tough, so only those who are good timekeepers succeed. You must make sure that you attend regularly and complete tasks within the deadlines that have been set.
- Always be aware of how you are communicating with other team members. Remember to treat others with respect. Criticism must always be given in a constructive manner and you must also respond to feedback from others in an appropriate way.

Just checking

1. What are the key things that need to be decided when beginning to plan a performing arts production?
2. What is a production schedule?
3. What are production meetings and why are they important?
4. What is a production noticeboard?
5. What happens during the fit-up?
6. What is a technical rehearsal?